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RIDGWAY.

*Musical Sketches, Abroad, and at Home.* By John Ella.

A PLEASANT book of gossip about music and musicians. Mr. Ella has travelled much abroad; and with a keen observation, and a fixed determination to pick up every scrap of information respecting the art, he has brought together many interesting anecdotes, which may be read both with pleasure and profit. If it be urged that the personality of the author obtrudes itself somewhat too much in the work, it must be recollected that a great part of it is taken from his own diary, where a man has a perfect right to talk about himself as much as he pleases. The only critical objection that we have to make to the book is that the "Musical Union" is too often held up as a model for a musical Society; and that to this aristocratic assembly the reader is constantly referred whenever music of a high class is mentioned; as, for instance, where in speaking most sensibly of the necessity of cultivating a knowledge of musical science, in order more fully to enjoy the great works in Art, he says, "The capacious votary who revels in roudades and mediocrity in Art, tauntingly jeers the enthusiastic devotee to the higher regions of the divine muse, and is totally wanting in sympathy with the admirers of those intellectual productions which engage the executants at the 'Musical Union.'" Considering that the same "intellectual productions," and the same "executants" are to be heard throughout the musical season at St. James's Hall, at a price within the reach of all, there can be now no reason for alluding solely to an exclusive coterie, which, excellent as it is in its way, can be but little known to the general public. In other respects, as we have already said, the book has much merit; especially as there is a great deal of valuable information respecting the state of music in the continental cities, scattered throughout its pages; and the reminiscences of the author date back for many years. So agreeably are most of the anecdotes told that we should be very glad if we could quote some for the benefit of our readers. As an instance of the pursuit of musical knowledge under difficulties, however, we cannot refrain from mentioning the case of a workman in one of the cotton-mills at Stockport, who wrote to the author inclosing postage-stamps for a copy of the "Record." Half-a-dozen of these publications were sent, and in acknowledging the receipt of them he says, "With your 'Records' for my guide, I anticipate (God willing) hours of enjoyment, as I sit at my leisure moments in my humble cottage, the walls of which are decorated with portraits of Handel, Mozart, Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Bach, Weber, Sterndale Bennett, Shakspeare, and others." After expressing an earnest wish for the success of Mr. Ella in his attempt to establish a musical library for students, he says; "Now, I am off to a rehearsal, a distance of seven miles to Manchester." In conclusion, we may say that there are many illustrations in the work, amongst the most interesting of which are a portrait of Mozart, with a love song addressed by the young composer to a lady, prior to his passion for Constance Weber. The melody and accompaniments of this musical trifle are, as may be anticipated, extremely beautiful.

LAMBORN COCK, ADDISON AND CO.

*Three Songs.* Inscribed to T. Clark, Esq.

1. *To Music.* Words by A. A. Watts.

2. *May-day.* Words by Heber.

3. *Farewell.* Words by Heber.

Composed by E. H. Thorne.

A GLANCE at these songs will prove that Mr. Thorne has been trained in a good school; whilst a more intimate acquaintance with them will reveal many beauties which do not appear upon the surface. "To Music" is a quiet, unobtrusive melody, the aim of which is evidently to reflect the words with the utmost fidelity; in proof of which we may cite the phrase "He listens," which is beautifully expressed by the C flat and E flat, on the triads

of A flat minor and E flat minor. Of a far higher character, however, are the other two songs on our list. "May-day" is a charmingly fresh melody, as suggestive as can be of "Spring's delights," about which poets and musicians are never tired of writing. Starting off with a rapid semiquaver accompaniment, which does not flag for four and twenty bars, the song is full of that impulsive thankfulness which the poet has successfully realised; and the harmonies throughout are never unduly forced, but appear to spring spontaneously from the natural flow of the melody. One great feature in this song is that there is as much care bestowed upon the progression of the parts as would be demanded by a composition of the severest school of writing, a merit which we need scarcely say is rarely to be found in vocal works merely thrown off, to order, for the song market. "Farewell" has a right to become popular both with musicians and amateurs, for it appeals with equal force to both. The melody is extremely beautiful. A quaint effect of rhythm is got by commencing on the second of the bar,—sometimes after a quaver rest, and sometimes by a note bound from the preceding bar,—the words being by this device absolutely spoken by the vocalist. The drop of the sixth, and afterwards of the seventh, in the voice part (the seventh being the dominant of the key to which the melody modulates), is an extremely happy thought; and the phrases are rendered doubly attractive by the artistic manner in which they are harmonised. Another excellent point is where, after a close upon the dominant, the melody commences in the tonic minor, with an accompaniment for the right hand alone; and we must also mention a beautiful bit of word-painting where the C natural rises through D sharp to E, on the dominant harmony of E major, afterwards falling to the dominant seventh, and finally to the third of the key, on the words, "Oh! bitter; bitter is the smart." To pass over such songs as these with a mere cold recognition of their general merits would be as unjust to the art as to the composer.

CHARLES JEFFERYS.

*The Pillar of the Cloud.* Sacred Song. Written by the Rev. J. B. Newman, D.D.

Composed by G. A. Macfarren.

AN expressive and well written song, harmonised with so much skill as to invest a simple melody with deep interest. The unexpected minor seventh in page 2, which interrupts the close on F, is a point worth remarking; and the phrase in D minor, after the short symphony, is exceedingly melodious.

*When the Stars shine o'er the Lindens.* Song. The Words by J. P. Douglas. The Music by Alfred Plumptre.

A VOCAL melody, in A flat, which, without any especial claim to originality, may be commended for the simplicity and purity of the harmonies and accompaniments. We think that Mr. Plumptre may do better things.

*Thirty Years Ago.* Song. The words by R. Reece. The Music by G. B. Allen.

THERE is real musical feeling about this song which makes it stand forth from the multitude of vocal compositions of the day. It is written for a very low contralto, and accompanied so as never to interfere with the voice. The song is in E major; and we must especially point to one very beautiful passage, which after a close upon the dominant, commences in G major. The composition is well adapted for Madame Sainton-Dolby, by whom it appears it has been already sung.

AUGENER AND CO.

*Macbeth. Scena Tragica.* For the Pianoforte.

*Falling Leaves. Capriccio.* For the Pianoforte.

Composed by J. H. Deane.

TO compose a "Scena Tragica" for the pianoforte, and especially upon a subject which has been already immortalised by Shakespeare, requires no ordinary amount of genius. Mr. Deane's piece, musically considered, is by